1: Turnbull E-4. 5 (1951-1955) 1965 FO4 Pygmies FO4 •
Mbuti
Zaire FO1

[ARCHERS]

The candidates, Mbuti and villager, are led before the operator and are, if brave enough, circumcised standing up; otherwise, they are laid on the ground and held down. Next to every Lese youth stands a Pygmy boy, who is circumcised immediately after him. The two enter into a lasting bond of *karé* brotherhood. As the circumcision is completed, the Lese blows his signal horn, and the Mbuti his *segbe* pipe. The women in the village hear this and reply with a shout of joy at this sign that their sons have now become men. By this joint ceremony the *karé* stand in an even closer relationship to each other than do blood brothers.

Schebesta gives little account of the ensuing instruction, though he mentions the brutality with which he says the initiates are treated in the camp. Food is brought by the mothers and left nearby; the elders from the camp go to collect it. The boys are cut off from any comfort they might be given by their mothers. Instruction, "partly social, partly moral" (Schebesta, 1948, 481) may be given by the lineage head himself or by one of the other elders.

The major aspects of the *nkumbi*, from Schebesta's account, seem to be the formal transition from boyhood to manhood, the establishment of a *karé* relationship between Mbuti and villagers, and the introduction of all the initiates for the first time to a special trumpet that plays an important part in the men's secret

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PLATE 28 1/A

PYGMY PHYSICAL TYPES, EPULU DISTRICT, CENTRAL ITURI

a. An Mbuti hunter and child. Every child has a father in every hunter, even in such a case as this, in which the child's mother was a member of the band until she married a villager, who fathered the boy. Such children are brought up in the village, as villagers, and never become members of an Mbuti band, however much affection they might receive when the hunters visit the village.

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885
• 202

b. A youth, shortly to become a hunter. He will already be assuming the responsibilities of adulthood, though he is unlikely to own a hunting net of his own until he is married. Elbow clapping is a major means of signaling through the forest. By flexing the elbow against the side of the chest the sound box is enlarged or compressed, causing a variation in pitch, which, when combined with rhythmic variations, allows for the sending of reasonably complex messages. The result of a hunt can be quickly relayed back to the camp in this way.

1/A /Plate 28 appears on page 289--Analyst/

[P.288]

1: Turnbull E-4. 5 (1961-1965) 1965 FO4 Pygmies FO4 Mbuti

1: Turnbull E-4 5 (1951-1955) 1965 FO4 Pygmies FO4
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/Plate 28-B/

/Caption appears on p.288/

2: Turnbull E-5 (1951-1958) 1965 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti

renown, the man with a troublesome trio of wives, himself a frequent cause of friction in the camp. Shaking his finger at Ekianga, Moké said, "And that is a man, completely clean. He pleases my spirit [*roho*] very much."

After the evening meal Moké stood in the middle of the camp and pointed to the hearth of each great hunter and male elder in turn, naming them, and saying, "This is my man, this is my hearth, for it is his hearth; but it is not Asuku's." He even pointed over to Cephu's camp, and included Cephu. He then went back to his hut, leaving Asuku at the central fire with two elders.

Despite this display of disaffection, however, Asuku remained on. He had not only been pointed at, but named in public, and another had been named as good while he had been named as bad—a double disgrace. Ridicule, after this, was pointless, and although everyone wanted to be rid of Asuku, their respect for Njobo, coupled with Njobo's continued absence, prevented them from doing more than ignoring the offender as far as possible. After some three months, however, Asuku began to frequent the village for long periods. Although this meant he was at least not in the camp, which was thereby much improved, the hunters found this the ultimate insult and disloyalty. When he refused a summons to return to the hunting camp, old Moké once again stood in midcamp, an honored position from which any Mbuti, young or old, is free to claim the attention of everyone. He said that since now Asuku had become a villager, he was no longer an Mbuti, no longer "ours"; he belonged far away, very far away indeed. Pointing to the central fire in the section of the camp that included Njobo's wife and three great hunters, and divers others both related and unrelated, he said, "This is a matter of the forest. This is our hearth. It is Njobo's hearth. It is not Asuku's hearth. He belongs in the village or completely and absolutely far away."

There were murmurs of assent from everyone, and Moké looked around to each individual hearth, asking, "Is my spirit [*roho*] right?" Agreement was unanimous, though subdued, and Moké simply said, "*Asi-to*"—"It is finished." The next day word was sent by a youth to Asuku's father, in the territory of Effundi Somali, a few miles on the far side of the Epulu. I was told that the youth simply gave a verbatim account of what had happened. Asuku never returned to the Epulu band, and left the village, returning to his father's territory.

His cousin, Mbaaka, was not such a stranger in the band, but soon after his marriage, and some six months after the Asuku episode, he

2: Turnbull E-5 (1951-1958) 1965 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti

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36. When the kill is assured, a youth signals back to the camp and to other hunters, to let them know what kind of game has fallen into whose net. Relatively complex messages can be signaled in this way, variations in rhythm combining with variations in pitch achieved by flexing the elbow, which forms a sound box when clapped with the other hand.

3: Turnbull E-5 (1951-1958) 1962 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti

husband, and the final step, if he did not stop her, was for her to pack her few belongings and walk off, having completely demolished their home first. Then she would return to the home of her parents. It is the nature of a Pygmy never to admit he is wrong, and the husband was beginning to feel equally anxious. Things had gone too far for either of them to patch up the quarrel without being shamed in the eyes of all those who were watching to see what would happen next. He sat silent, hugging his knees, looking as miserable as his wife. Then he brightened up suddenly and turned around to see how far the demolition had gone. Only a few sticks had been pulled out. He called to his wife not to bother with the sticks, it was only the leaves that were dirty. She looked at him with a puzzled *"Ayiiiii?"*—and then, understanding, asked him to help her carry the leaves down to the stream. This they did, and together they gravely washed every single leaf and brought them back. While she joyfully put the leaves back on the hut he stoked up the fire and then went off with his bow and arrows to see if he could find some game to bring back for a special dinner.

The pretense was that she had been taking the leaves off not because she was angry, but because they were dirty and attracted ants and spiders. Nobody believed this, but everyone was glad the quarrel was over. For several days women talked politely about the insects in the leaves of their huts, and took a few leaves down to the stream to wash, as if this was a perfectly normal procedure. I have never seen it done before or since.

But apart from little excitements of this kind during the day, the camp really comes to life only when the hunt returns. Long before the first hunter appears the whole camp knows exactly who has caught what. They know partly by listening for the shouts and arm-claps of the returning hunters, which they can hear from a considerable distance, and partly because throughout the day children come and

3: Turnbull E-5 (1951-1958) 1962 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti

go between the camp and the hunt, if they are not too far apart, bringing news to and fro.

As soon as the hunters return they deposit the meat on the ground, and the camp gathers to make sure the division is fair. Nobody acknowledges that it is, but in the end everyone is satisfied. Cooking operations start at once and within an hour everyone is eating. If the hunt has been a good one, and the day is still young, the most energetic men and women dance immediately afterward, followed by the children. In the course of such a dance they imitate, with suitable exaggeration, the events of the day. If the hunt has not been so good, or a man is tired and does not feel like dancing, he will sit down and gather his family around him and tell them something that has happened to him on the hunt, something wonderful and exciting, but which naturally happened while nobody else was looking.

Since Pygmies are blessed with a lively imagination, these stories grow until it is difficult to tell the difference between what is meant to be a straight, factual account and a traditional legend. And there is always the element of the two-way process in which fact becomes legend, and legend becomes accepted, through constant repetition, as fact.

The dream world of the Pygmies is a very real one, full of hidden meaning and significance. There is one story that Cephu is still fond of telling, and he still tells it in almost exactly the same way as he did six years earlier when I first heard it.

He had been into the village for a short visit, and we all knew he had gone empty-handed. Yet when he returned a few days later he brought a sizable load of plantains and rice with him. Everyone asked him who he had stolen it from. Cephu, with a great smile spreading across his face, sat down and waited for his audience to settle down. With his wife and his children close behind him, and his friends all around, Cephu sat simply on the ground in his most charming and bewitching way, old rascal that he was, even then. He looked up